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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
Research and Analysis Branch

TO: Donald N. Wheeler DATE: August 30, 1943

FROM: Hans H. Landsberg R & A 1126 (LS-212)

SUBJECT: Changes in Standards of Physical Fitness in the German Army, 1939 to 1942

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No.1126

Conclusion

On the basis of the experience of the 1935 German muster and the changes in physical standards that have occurred since 1937, it is estimated that no more than 6 per cent of the conscripts will be rejected, either temporarily or permanently.

Sources

The following observations are based on two documents that have recently come into our possession. The first is called "Vorschrift über militärärztliche Untersuchungen der Wehrmacht, Teil 1, Untersuchungen Dienstpflichtiger und Freiwilliger auf Tauglichkeit;" its file number is H.Dv.252/1, M.Dv.Nr.248/1, L.Dv. 399/1, and its effective date is June 1, 1937. This document contains a number of amendments dated January 1939. The second document, effective October 2, 1942, is called "Ärztliche Anweisung zur Beurteilung der Kriegsbrauchbarkeit bei Kriegsmusterungen (V.U.Wm. Teil 4 Auszug I) vom 12.8.42;" its file number is

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Both documents contain the official list of defects and deformities on which the examining physician bases his classification of the conscript or volunteer. The list of the second document replaces that of the first, even though it is clear from the second document that there must exist a third and intermediary document which replaced the first one and went into effect at the beginning of the war. This is obvious both from the reference in the 1942 document and from the fact that the 1937 document is drawn up in terms of the peacetime classification (see below) which must have been replaced at the latest at the outbreak of the war.

However, the fact that we have not available this intermediary document, need not disturb us very much since it is possible to reconstruct the change in standards from the documents we have.

The Classification System

All defects and deformities are classified by one or more out of six letter symbols (A,B,Z,L,U, v.U). The letter determines into what classification the examinee is to be put.

The 1937 document provides us with the classification then used. There were six classes into which the examinee might be put at the time of the first examination (Musterung):

(1)	Tauglich	- Fit[1/] (F)
(2)	Bedingt tauglich	- Conditionally fit (CF)
(3)	Zeitlich untauglich	- Temporarily unfit (TU)
(4)	Beschränkt tauglich	- Limitedly fit (LF)
(5)	Untauglich (Waffendienst)	- Unfit for military service (MU)
(6)	Völlig untauglich	- Totally unfit (TU)

Only those in class (1) and (2) were taken into the Army, the latter only for a short course (8 weeks). Those in class (3) were re-examined at the time of the draft (Aushebung). Class 4 was not taken

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1/ A distinction is frequently made between "Fit-1" and "Fit-2", where "Fit-1" presumably refers to men who have no defects whatever, while "Fit-2" covers those having defects which do not affect the "Fitness" decision. This distinction, according to the documents at our disposal, is not one made by the examining physician, and does not appear anywhere in the instructions. The physician must classify the man as either "fit" or "conditionally fit;" there is no intermediate class. The introduction of the "Fit-2" class only serves to confuse the picture, as is seen in the War Department's Handbook on German Military Forces (TM 30-450, Dec. 17, 1941), pp. 28-9. There it is first stated that all those declared Fit are taken for the full 2-year course, and in the next sentence the statement is made that those in class 2 only get an 8-week course, and that those in class 5 (Limitedly fit) also get an 8-week course (whereas they do not enter the Army at all).

into the Army, but there was provision for putting some of them into the Labor Service. Class 5 and 6 of course were taken neither into the Army nor into the Labor Service.

In wartime the classification system naturally changes radically, and the following classes are established:

(1)	K.V. = Kriegsverwendungsfaehig	Fit for general service
(2)	Zeitlich untauglich	Temporarily unfit
(3)	g.v.F = Garnisonsverwendungsfaehig Feld	Fit for garrison duty, Th. of Oper.
(4)	g.v.H = Garnisonsverwendungsfaehig Heimat	Fit for garrison duty, home including Occupied Territories
(5)	a.v. = Arbeitsverwendungsfaehig	Fit for labor service duty
(6)	w.u. = Wehruntauglich	Unfit

The two systems can be compared as follows: those classified fit and conditionally fit in peacetime will both be K.V. in wartime; those limitedly fit or militarily unfit in peacetime will be g.v.F., g.v.H., or a.v., according to kind and degree of defect; those temporarily or totally unfit remain unchanged. The greatest change is therefore in peacetime classes (4) and (5), neither of which was taken into the armed forces

in peacetime and both of which are taken for some kind of duty, ranging from g.v.F. to a.v., in wartime. This can most easily be shown in the following diagram:

Type of defect	A	B	Z	L	U	v.U
Peacetime classification	F	CF	TU	LF	MU	TU
Wartime classification	KV	KV	TU	(g.v.F., g.v.H. a.v.)		TU

Thus, it can be seen at a glance that the transition from peace to war immediately makes available to the army all men with defects falling into classes B, L, and U.[1/]

Changes in Standards since April 1937[2/]

Both the amendments to the April 1937 standards, issued in January 1939, and the revised standards, effective October 1942, show mainly one type of change, and that is an upgrading of those defects which may be remedied through treatment.

A number of such defects (arrested development, benign growths, hydroceles, testes in inguinal canal, varicose veins) were changed from column Z to column B

1/ Not all men in "U" will become available, cf. p.8.

2/ For a comprehensive tabulation of all changes see Appendix A.

in 1939, thus changing "temporary unfitness" to "conditional fitness."

By and large, the 1942 revisions belong to the same class, either shifting further towards full fitness those defects which had already been shifted one step in the 1939 amendment, or providing for additional shifts, this time jumping from "temporarily unfit" (column Z) to "fit" (column A).

Among the most noteable additional changes (from "Z" to "A") are:

(1) Syphilis and gonorrhea in need of treatment.

(2) Acute disease of the teeth, teeth sockets or gums, which are urgently in need of a long and comprehensive treatment.

(3) All rectal conditions, all inguinal or intestinal hernia, and supernumerary fingers or toes, when remediable by operation.

Other changes, all representing upgrading, are:

(1) Alcoholism and other intoxicating manias, from (L) to (Z),

(2) Very crooked toes which lie on top of each other with insignificant impairment to walking,

from (B) to (A),

(3) Extensive varicose veins remediable byoperation or injection, from (Z) to (B).

With one or two exceptions then, all the changes are of the same character, shifting men from the "temporarily unfit" class to "fit," if the defect can be remedied by operation or other "appropriate means." While the 1937 standards have provisions for temporary unfitness in 44 cases, the 1942 standards make such provisions in only 36 cases.

No similar changes have been made at the lower end of the scale, i.e. no defects formerly classified under "U" or "v.U" have been upgraded. However, since many defects, in fact 45 out of the total of 80,[1/] can be classified by the physician as either "U" or "v.U", according to severity, with an additional 5 defects ranging from "L" to "v.U", changes in standards may take place without any change in the classification table.

Such changes as have taken place at the lower end of the table involve the widening of the former "U" classification to embrace both "U" and "v.U", a neces-

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1/ The 1937 list had only 79 groups, but in 1939 tropical diseases were added.

sary measure since "U" defects result in rejection in peacetime but not in wartime.[1] Thus, in peacetime it is sufficient to put a man in the "U" class to keep him out of the army, whereas in wartime provision must be made to put the man into "total unfitness" class if necessary.

Quantitative Analysis

It is not too difficult to translate the information summarized above into quantitative terms, since we have some information on mustering results in the German Army for the year 1935. This is contained in a memorandum drawn up by Major George D. Williams in the Office of the Surgeon General. According to Major Williams, the results refer to the class called up in that year, i.e. those below 21 years of age; they would therefore be applicable to the incoming class only. On that basis, prior to the change in standards, 82 per cent of the conscripts would be taken for general service, another 8 to 10 per cent for garrison or labor service, and 6 per cent would be deferred as temporarily unfit, leaving only 1 to 3 per cent as unfit.[2]

1/ These changes were made in 11 groups of diseases in April 1942 (Heeresverordnungsblatt, Teil B, May 11, 1942. Nr. 407).

2/ The reason why there is a margin of uncertainty of 2 per cent is that 2 per cent were classified as "militarily unfit" (class "U") in 1935. Since as was shown above, many of the defects classified as "U" in 1937 have been extended to embrace also "v.U", it is impossible to say what part of these 2 per cent are now fit or unfit.

Since the main change has been a shift from "temporarily unfit" to "fit," the figure of 6 per cent "temporarily unfit" must be reduced. By how much is impossible to say, since we have no breakdown showing reasons for classification as "temporarily unfit" either for Germany or for a comparable classification in the U. S. Army. There can be little doubt, however, that the shift of men with active cases of syphilis or gonorrhea alone must have resulted in cutting down this figure of 6 per cent. It may be possible to obtain some estimate on this point from the Surgeon General's Office. However, even without additional information, we may safely conclude that the percentage of conscripts from an incoming class physically acceptable to the Army must be around 94 per cent.

APPENDIX A

CHANGES IN TABLE OF DEFECTS, 1937, 1939, 1942 1/

		A	B	Z	L	U	v.U
(1)	1937			Arrested development which will probably be compensated. Weakness after sickness or injuries.			
	1939		Arrested development which will probably be compensated.	Weakness after sickness or injuries, probably to last for some time.			
(4)	1937			Syphilis in need of treatment.			
	1942		Syphilis in need of treatment.				
(5)	1937			Non-malignant tumors or exostoses which can be removed without difficulty with good results to be expected.			
	1939		Non-malignant tumors or large extoses which may be removed if necessary.				
	1942		Non-malignant tumors or exostoses which can be removed without difficulty with good results to be expected.				

		A	B	Z	L	U	v.U
(12)	1937				*----------Diabetes mellitus		
	1942				*----------Diabetes mellitus----------*		
(13)	1937					Gout that is chronic and objectively manifest.	
	1942					*----Gout that is chronic and objectively manifest--------*	
(14)	1937	History of "articular rheumatism" without manifest sequelae					
	1942	*---History of "articular rheumatism" without manifest sequelae.----------*					
(15)	1937			Severe alcoholism and other "drug addictions". Weak mind of medium degree, [illegible] (debility)		History of mental disease. Weakness of mind to serious degree (imbecility, idiocy).	
	1942	Minor mental aberrations (characteropathy) otherwise fully fit.	Alcoholism and other "drug addictions" (?)	Weak mind of small degree (debility)	Weak mind, medium degree (imbecility) Severe mental aberrations of disease quality (e.g. compulsives, depressives, phobias).	History of mental disease. High degree of mental deficiency (idiocy)	

	A	B	Z	L	U
(34)	1937			Chronic diseases of the nose and nasal cavities	
	1942	History of diseases of nose or nasal cavities without tendency to relapse.		Chronic diseases of the nose and nasal cavities with tendency to relapse.	
(39)	1937		Acute disease of the teeth, teeth sockets, or gums urgently in need of long, comprehensive treatment.		
	1942	Diseases of teeth, teeth sockets, gums which are in urgent need of comprehensive treatment			
(48)	1937	Hayfever (confined to eyes and nose)	Mild asthma with emphysema or bronchial asthma occuring now and then, without affecting greatly efficiency at time of attack.		
	1942	Light allergies, (e.g. light forms of hayfever, uti-	Mild asthma with emphysema or bronchial asthma occuring now and then, without affecting greatly efficiency at time of attack	Acute allergic conditions in need of treatment.	

		A	B	Z	L	U
(51)	1937	Tendency to inguinal hernia or minor intestinal hernia which cause no trouble and require no truss.		All inguinal or intestinal hernia that may be remedied by operation; sequelae of recovery from operation for intestinal hernia.		
	1942	Tendency to inguinal hernia or minor intestinal hernia which cause no trouble and require no truss or which may be remedied by operation.		/Eliminated already in 1939/		
(52)	1937					All serious diseases of the abdominal viscera with considerable effect on the general physical condition.
	1942					All serious diseases of the abdominal viscera and chronic stomach diseases with considerable effect on the general physical condition. Permanent carriers of typhoid fever bacilli.
(53)	1937	Hemorrhoids not giving trouble.		All rectal conditions that may be corrected by operation.		
	1942	Hemorrhoids not giving trouble or remediable by operation.				

		A	B	Z	L	U	v.U
(54)	1937			Gonorrhea in need of treatment			
	1942	Gonorrhea in need of treatment					
(56)	1937	Operated hydrocele or hydrocele giving no trouble.		Hydrocele remediable by operation.			
	1939		Fairly large hydrocele which maybe operated if necessary.				
	1942	Operated hydrocele or hydrocele giving no trouble. Hydrocele remediable by operation.					
(57)	1937	One or two testes in abdomen, etc. if no trouble caused thereby.		Testes in inguinal canal causing trouble but remediable by operation.			
	1939	One or two testes in abdomen etc. if no trouble caused thereby.	Testes in inguinal canal causing occasional trouble, but remediable by operation if necessary.				
	1942	One or two testes in abdomen etc. if no trouble caused thereby or if operation will probably remove trouble.	Testes in inguinal canal causing occasional trouble, but remediable by operation if necessary.				

	A	B	Z	L	U	v.U
1937		Supernumerary fingers if use of hand not seriously impaired or manipulation of weapons not seriously interfered with.	Supernumerary fingers if operable and full capacity of hand can be expected to be restored thereby.			
(71)						
1942	Supernumerary fingers if operable and full capacity of hand can be expected to be restored thereby.	Supernumerary fingers if use of hand not seriously impaired or manipulation of weapons not seriously interfered with.				
1937		Large varicose veins not giving serious trouble and not greatly impairing efficiency.	History of recent operation on varicose veins. Extensive varicose veins remediable by operation or injection.			
(73)						
1942		large varicose veins not giving serious trouble and not greatly impairing efficiency or when this may be remedied by appropriate measures.	History of recent operation on varicose veins. Second sentence of ~~Eliminated already in 1939~~ above was eliminated already in 1939.			